

Beat the heat

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During the summer months, the temperatures in British Columbia can exceed 30°C (86°F), sometimes reaching the mid to high 30s in some parts of the province. Too much heat can be harmful to your health and cause heat-related illnesses.

Heat-related illness is the result of your body gaining heat faster than it can cool itself down. Those at increased risk for heat-related illness include people 65 years of age or older, infants and children, and people who do a lot of physical activity or work in a hot environment. In most cases, heat-related illnesses are preventable.

Learn more about heat-related illness and get tips on how to stay cool when it is hot outside.

Staying healthy in the heat

When it is hot outside, it can be easy to become dehydrated or suffer from a heat-related illness. Drink plenty of fluids even if you do not feel thirsty, as dehydration can occur quickly in high temperatures.

Monitor indoor temperatures regularly, especially if you or someone in your household is vulnerable to heat. Sustained indoor temperatures above 31°C (87.8°F) can be dangerous for older adults, infants and young children, people with chronic illnesses, and those without access to ways to stay cool. Use thermometers to track indoor heat and take action to cool your space if temperatures rise.

Take additional precautions during early-season heat waves, as these can be especially dangerous when your body is not yet used to hot weather.

To keep yourself and your family safe and healthy during hot weather:

- Limit outdoor activity during the hottest times of the day
- Use fans carefully, knowing they are not always effective in reducing core body temperature especially for older adults
- Keep blinds or curtains closed during the day to block out heat. Open windows in the evening when the air is cooler (only if outdoor air quality allows)
- Seek out cooler indoor spaces such as libraries, malls or designated cooling centres
- Check in on vulnerable people in your community, especially during prolonged heat events

Learn how you can beat the heat, to keep yourself and your family safe and healthy.

- [BC Hydro: Heat happens. Here's how to keep your cool this summer](#)
- [Fraser Health: Sun and heat safety](#)
- [Government of Canada: Staying Healthy in the Heat](#)
- [Government of Canada: Sun safety basics](#)
- [Island Health: Sun Protection](#)
- [Island Health: Heat Safety](#)

- [Sun Safety for Children \(HealthLinkBC File #26\)](#)
- [Ultraviolet Radiation \(HealthLinkBC File #11\)](#)

To learn more about staying safe and healthy this summer, visit [Your health this summer](#).

Extreme heat

Extreme heat can put your health at risk, causing illness such as heat stroke or even death. It is important to take steps to protect yourself, your family, and other potentially vulnerable people in your life.

Heat events in B.C. are classified into two categories, a heat warning, or an extreme heat emergency. A heat warning happens when conditions are very hot and there is a moderate risk to public health. An extreme heat emergency happens when conditions are dangerously hot and have a very high risk to public health.

[Environment and Climate Change Canada](#) distributes alerts for heat events that are moderate or high risk to the health of the public.

Heat warning

A heat warning is when daytime and overnight temperatures are higher than usual, but they are not getting hotter every day. If there is a heat warning, you should take steps to stay cool.

Extreme heat emergency

An extreme heat emergency is when daytime and overnight temperatures get hotter every day and are well above seasonal norms. When an extreme heat warning is issued, it is time to put your emergency plan into action. Make sure you have access to cooler spaces and take steps to ensure you limit physical activity in the heat. Check on older or vulnerable people that you know to make sure they are adequately prepared for the potentially dangerous temperatures.

Monitoring indoor temperatures is also very important during heat events. Prolonged exposure to indoor temperatures above 31°C (87.8°F) can be dangerous for vulnerable populations.

[Emergency Info BC](#) is active during partial and full-scale provincial emergencies and will share verified event information.

For more information on extreme heat, visit:

- [BC Centre for Disease Control: Preparing for Heat Events](#)
- [Canadian Red Cross: Heat Waves: Before, During & After](#)
- [Fraser Health Authority: Extreme Heat](#)
- [Government of British Columbia: Extreme Heat Preparedness Guide](#)
- [Government of British Columbia: Be prepared for extreme heat](#)
- [Government of Canada: Extreme heat events: Overview](#)
- [Interior Health: Extreme Heat](#)
- [Northern Health: Extreme heat and heat warnings](#)
- [Vancouver Coastal Health: Extreme heat](#)

Public weather alerts for British Columbia

When severe weather threatens, Environment Canada issues alerts that notify those in the affected communities. Learn more:

- [Government of Canada: Alerts for - Metro Vancouver - central including the City of Vancouver Burnaby and New Westminster](#)
- [Government of Canada: Latest Heat Warning – All alerts All BC](#)
- [Government of Canada: Public Weather Alerts for British Columbia](#)
- [Government of Canada: WeatherCAN mobile app](#)

The Province of B.C. will issue broadcast intrusive alerts through the Alert Ready System when an extreme heat emergency is declared. Learn more at Government of British Columbia: [Emergency Alerts in B.C.](#)

Heat-related illnesses

Too much heat can be harmful to your health. Heat-related illness is the result of your body gaining heat faster than it can cool itself down. Heat-related illnesses can almost always be prevented.

If you think you have a heat-related illness, use our [Heat-Related Illnesses: Check Your Symptoms](#) tool to help make an informed decision on when to seek healthcare. For additional information, visit:

- [Heat-related Illness in Infants and Young Children \(HealthLinkBC File #35c\)](#)
- [Heat Rash](#)
- [Heat Syncope \(Fainting\)](#)
- [Heat-related Illness \(HealthLinkBC File #35\)](#)
- [Safety for Infants and Young Children During Extreme Heat \(HealthLinkBC File #35b\)](#)
- [Safety for the Perinatal Population During Extreme Heat \(HealthLinkBC File #35a\)](#)
- [Sunburn](#)

Medications and heat

Some drugs and medications make it difficult for your body to adapt to hot temperatures. Never modify how you take your medication unless advised to by your healthcare provider. Learn more about how heat affects your body when taking medications.

- [Medications and Heat](#) (poster, PDF 451 KB)
- [Medicines That Increase the Chance for a Heat-Related Illness](#)

Heatstroke

Heatstroke is a life-threatening medical emergency. Call **9-1-1** or other emergency medical services as soon as you suspect or see the signs of heatstroke in an individual. Heatstroke signs include high body temperature, confusion, dizziness/fainting and flushed skin. Learn more about heatstroke.

- [Emergency First Aid for Heatstroke](#)
- [Heatstroke: Emergency Symptoms](#)
- [Heatstroke Prevention: What to Wear](#)

Hot car warning

Never leave a child or pet alone in a vehicle, even for a few minutes. Leaving the car windows slightly open or "cracked" will not keep the inside of the vehicle at a safe temperature. If you come across a child or animal in distress left in a hot vehicle, call **9-1-1**. For more information, visit [Canada Safety Council: Hot Car Warning](#).

Workplace health and safety

When you work outdoors or indoors in environments with high temperatures such as bakeries, smelters, or restaurant kitchens, you are at risk for heat stress and other health concerns. Learn more about hot environments, how they can affect you and ways to prevent heat stress at work.

- [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety: Hot Environments](#)
- [WorkSafeBC: Heat stress](#)

Places to keep cool

When it's too hot outside, many public places and municipal buildings will offer you a chance to cool down. Local community centres, malls, pools, and libraries usually have air-conditioned areas open to the public. Many communities have waterparks, wading pools, and beaches where you can cool down. Local government websites often list community centres, fountains, libraries, swimming pools, water parks, and wading pools.

Find a list of cooling centres [in your area](#).

If your local community is not listed, please call your local [municipality](#) or check their website to find where air-conditioned cooling centres are located. You can also [contact your local library](#) to know if they are open.